GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6249
ANSWERED ON:15.05.2012
GM CROPS FOR FOOD CRISIS
Chanabasappa Shri Udasi Shivkumar

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) has cautioned against the genetically modified crops as a solution for food crisis;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

SSSS
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI HARISH RAWAT)

(a) & (b): Yes, Madam. International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) had come out with Report, 'Agriculture at a Crossroads' on the basis of a study which was initiated in 2002 by the World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as a global consultative process to determine whether an international assessment of agricultural knowledge, science and technology was needed. The report covers a wide range of issues. The first part of the report covers issues relating to reduction of hunger and poverty, improvement of rural livelihoods and human health as well as equitable, socially, environmentally and economically sustainable development. The second part of the report deals with the cross cutting themes which include bio-energy, biotechnology, climate change, human health, natural resource management, trade and market, traditional and local knowledge, community based innovation, and women in agriculture.
The report, on the whole, emphasizes on agro-ecological approaches based on equitable and sustainable development of agricultural practices such as integrated natural resources management, organic farming, integrated pest management and conservation agriculture etc. for achieving sustainable agriculture for food security.

(c): Department of Agriculture & Cooperation (DAC), recognizes importance of the issues related to bio-energy, biotechnology, improvement of rural livelihoods, poverty alleviation, food security and health care issues in the context of conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. In matters related to sustainable agriculture, DAC follows the policy guidelines of National Policy on Farmers (NPF), 2007 with major goals such as improving economic viability of farming, conserving land, water biodiversity and genetic resources to provide quality inputs for farming, strengthening bio-security of crops, and creating sustainable rural livelihoods etc., which are also the objectives of the schemes implemented by Government of India. In matters related to modern agricultural biotechnology, the guiding principle is the economic well being of the farm families, health security and safety of the consumer, protection of the environment, food security of the nation and the security of national and international trade in farm commodities.
As far as Genetically Modified (GM) crops are concerned, their releases for commercial cultivation are approved only after satisfying all the regulatory mechanism required as per the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and Rules 1989, issued by Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India. Bt. cotton is the only Genetically Modified crop approved for commercial cultivation by Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) of Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) in nine major states viz. Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. There is no food crop as such, which has been approved for commercial cultivation in the country.